

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus in an infuser for a liquid food product, the infuser including a pressure vessel with an inlet for the product located in its upper region and an outlet for the product located in its lower region, ~~said the~~ product inlet being disposed to divide the product entering into the pressure vessel into small droplets, and the infuser also including ~~two steam inlets which are diametrically placed and radially~~ at least one steam inlet disposed such that steam enters into the upper region of the pressure vessel through a concentric distribution chamber, wherein the concentric distribution chamber is defined by a wall of the pressure vessel, a guide plate and at least one foraminated plate, wherein the concentric distribution chamber is designed so that the steam, on entering the pressure vessel, is downwardly directed and is at a speed of < 2 m/sec, and the pressure vessel is designed so that the product ~~is~~ droplets are treated by the steam below the guide plate and the droplets fall freely through the pressure vessel until the droplets reach a liquid surface in the lower region below the guide plate.

2. (Previously Presented) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the apparatus includes two foraminated plates which are sealingly secured against the wall of the pressure vessel and against the guide plate.

3. (Previously Presented) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 2, wherein holes of the plates have a diameter of 1-10 mm.

4. (Previously Presented) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 3, wherein the holes have a diameter of 2-5 mm.

5. (Previously Presented) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 3, wherein the guide plate has an extent below the foraminated plates which at least corresponds to the diameter of the holes multiplied by ten.

6. (Previously Presented) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 3, wherein the guide plate has an extent below the foraminated plates which is 50-60 mm.

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Cancelled)

9. (Currently Amended) An apparatus in an infuser for a liquid food product, the infuser comprising a pressure vessel with an inlet for the product located in its upper region and an outlet for the product located in its lower region, the product inlet being disposed to divide the product entering into the pressure vessel into small droplets, and the infuser also including ~~two steam inlets which are diametrically placed and radially~~ at least one steam inlet disposed such that steam enters into the upper region of the pressure vessel through a concentric distribution

chamber, wherein the concentric distribution chamber is defined by a wall of the pressure vessel, a guide plate and at least one foraminated plate, and the pressure vessel is designed so that the product is droplets are treated by the steam below the guide plate and the droplets fall freely through the pressure vessel until the droplets reach a liquid surface in the lower region below the guide plate.

10. (Previously Presented) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 9, wherein the apparatus includes two foraminated plates which are sealingly secured against the wall of the pressure vessel and against the guide plate.

11. (Previously Presented) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 10, wherein holes of the plates have a diameter of 1-10 mm.

12. (Previously Presented) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 11, wherein the holes have a diameter of 2-5 mm.

13. (Previously Presented) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 11, wherein the guide plate has an extent below the foraminated plates which at least corresponds to the diameter of the holes multiplied by ten.

14. (Previously Presented) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 11, wherein the guide plate has an extent below the foraminated plates which is 50-60 mm.

15. (Cancelled)

16. (Withdrawn) An apparatus in an infuser for a liquid food product, the infuser comprising a pressure vessel with an inlet for the product located in its upper region and an outlet for the product located in its lower region, the product inlet being disposed to divide the product entering into the pressure vessel into small droplets, and the infuser also including an inlet for steam disposed such that steam enters into the upper region of the pressure vessel through a concentric distribution chamber defined by a wall of the pressure vessel, a guide plate and at least one foraminated plate, the guide plate having a lower end, and the pressure vessel having a constant inner diameter from the lower end of the guide plate to above the lower end.

17. (Withdrawn-Currently Amended) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 16, comprising a product distribution chamber wall in the upper region of the pressure vessel, the product distribution chamber including a planar lower wall having a plurality of holes through which the product passes and forms the small droplets in the pressure vessel.

18. (Withdrawn-Currently Amended) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 17, wherein the lower wall is centrally located in the upper region of the pressure vessel and the droplets fall freely from the lower wall through the pressure vessel until the droplets reach a liquid surface in the lower region below the guide plate.

19. (New) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 1, comprising a product distribution chamber in the upper region, the product distribution chamber includes a

planar lower wall having a plurality of holes through which the product passes and forms the small droplets in the pressure vessel, and the droplets fall freely from the lower wall through the pressure vessel until the droplets reach the liquid surface.

20. (New) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 19, wherein:

the apparatus includes two steam inlets which are diametrically placed and radially disposed; and

the lower wall is centrally located in the upper region of the pressure vessel.

21. (New) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 9, comprising a product distribution chamber in the upper region, the product distribution chamber includes a planar lower wall having a plurality of holes through which the product passes and forms the small droplets in the pressure vessel, and the droplets fall freely from the lower wall through the pressure vessel until the droplets reach the liquid surface.

22. (New) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 21, wherein:

the apparatus includes two steam inlets which are diametrically placed and radially disposed; and

the lower wall is centrally located in the upper region of the pressure vessel.